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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 000397

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHSA](#) [PBTS](#) [MARR](#) [SO](#) [SE](#)  
SUBJECT: SEYCHELLES REQUESTS CONTINUED DEPLOYMENT OF US AIR  
ASSETS

REF: PORT LOUIS 394

Classified By: CDA BARRIE WALKLEY FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a December 02 meeting with the Charge, Seychelles President James Michel praised US assistance in combating Somali piracy, supported the presence of US UAVs and requested the continued deployment of P-3s (currently scheduled to conclude December 22). Secretary-of-State Jean Paul Adam believes that any "information sharing" that results in frustrating an act of piracy will be "a public relations coup." Wavel Ramkalawan, leader of the political opposition in parliament, also fully supports the continued deployment of US assets in the Seychelles. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) James Michel, President of the Seychelles, met with Charge Walkley December 02 to discuss, among other matters, the deployment of US air assets in the Seychelles. (FYI: Those assets currently consist of 3 UAVs, 3 P-3s and approximately 170 personnel). Michel praised the US for assistance in combating Somali piracy, which he described as a "regional scourge affecting safety, trade and the economy," and added that he believes the US air assets operating out of the Seychelles "serve as a deterrent to increased piracy, giving the people of the Seychelles a sense of security." Michel said he was aware that the P-3s are on a 60-day mission in the Seychelles, a mission which would thus conclude on December 22. He then made a specific plea that the US consider extending the deployment of the P-3s -- or, if that is not possible -- consider returning the P-3s to the Seychelles in the near future.

¶3. (C) Michel said he is convinced that Somali pirates are not/not using any of the outlying Seychelles islands as bases, adding that there are Seychelles military and other observers on the islands to deter/detect any pirate presence.

¶4. (C) In a separate meeting, the Charge discussed the US air assets with Jean Paul Adam (Secretary-of-State and close confidant of Michel, who participated in the meeting with the President). Adam described the presence of the UAVs and the P-3s as "mutually beneficial for the Seychelles and the US" and added that any "information sharing" that directly results in preventing an act of piracy will be "a marvelous public relations coup." He said that anything close to "real-time" information from the UAVs, P-3s or any other source would be valuable to the Seychelles. Fearing that de-classification issues regarding sources might hold up the rapid transfer of information concerning pirate actions, Adam said that the Seychelles does not need to know the source of any information, only the information itself.

¶5. (C) Charge Walkley also met with Wavel Ramkalawan, leader of the political opposition and head of the Seychelles National Party. Ramkalawan said that his party -- along with the great majority of the Seychellois -- fully supports the recently-signed SOFA and the continued deployment of the UAV

and P-3 surveillance assets. Ramkalawan indicated that the only opposition to the deployment of the UAVs and P-3s has come from the New Democratic Party, a minor party which received less than 2 per cent of the vote in the last election and holds no seats in parliament.

¶16. (C) COMMENT: President Michel's willingness to meet the Charge, barely two hours after a long flight back from Cuba, is an indication of the importance Michel attaches to the US-Seychelles relationship, including the military relationship. He sees enhanced value in the deployment of US assets and is sincere in supporting the presence of the UAVs and in requesting continued deployment of the P-3s. Both President Michel and Secretary-of-State Jean Paul Adam are aware that the US assets in the Seychelles have multiple missions and targets; they are discreet, however, in ensuring that any public discussion of the assets focuses only on anti-piracy capabilities.

WALKLEY